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Economic Aspects of the Liquor Problem. An Investigation made for the Committee of Fifty. By JOHN KOREN. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899.—327 pp.

This volume is the second formal report published by the Committee of Fifty, the report of the legislative sub-committee having appeared in 1897. The present report, by the economic sub-committee, gives the results of a statistical inquiry into the relations of intemperance to poverty, pauperism and crime in the United States. It is based upon original investigation into 29,983 cases of poverty, reached chiefly through the agency of charity organization societies in 33 cities; 8420 cases of pauperism, in 50 almshouses; 5136 cases of child-destitution, reached through various voluntary and governmental agencies; and 13,402 cases of crime, found in 17 state prisons and reformatories. From these representative studies it is deduced that 25 per cent of the poverty that calls for systematic relief, 37 per cent of the pauperism in public institutions, 45 per cent of the cases of child-destitution and 50 per cent of the crime of the country are due, in greater or less degree, to the use and abuse of intoxicating liquors.

I will first note some items of special interest in the book, and then comment upon the plan of the work and its execution.

First, in the matter of poverty.—The common assertion that those who drink are not the ones who suffer is not borne out by these figures. While 18 per cent of the cases of poverty are attributed to the personal use of liquors, only 9 per cent are traced to the intemperate habits of others. As between the sexes, however, the difference in this respect is marked. While 22 per cent of the male applicants come to a condition of dependence through the personal use of liquor, the same is true of only 12 per cent of the female applicants; and, while only 3.8 per cent of the male applicants attribute their want to the intemperate habits of others, 17.1 per cent of the female applicants are the victims of others' indulgence. A singular deduction from untabulated data is to the effect that married women are more given to the liquor habit than unmarried; but among men the reverse is true, married men appearing to be more sober as a class than bachelors.

One might expect to find, in this inquiry into intemperance as a cause of poverty, some indications as to the relative efficacy of various liquor laws, but no such inferences can be drawn. Unfortunately, none of the organizations reporting are in "prohibition" states. Cambridge, Mass., the largest city in the United States

under local prohibition, reports 45.6 per cent of its poverty due to drink. Such great centres of population as New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, Baltimore and San Francisco show a comparatively small and remarkably uniform percentage, varying from 21 to 28.9; while some small cities on the frayed-out edges of these metropolitan centres show the largest percentages of all. The only generalization that a casual comparison of these reports seems to permit, respecting systems of regulation, is that based upon the good showing made by certain medium-sized cities in which we know that license laws are strictly enforced.

Secondly, in the matter of pauperism.—The tables showing the percentage of pauperism due to intemperance in the different occupations represented by the almshouse population are suggestive, but are likely to be misleading. For example, of those paupers who had been saloon-keepers or bar-tenders 84.6 per cent ascribed their condition to drink—a higher percentage than that shown by any other occupation. Of 26 occupations represented, however, the saloon-keepers and bar-tenders stand almost at the foot of the list in the actual number of paupers. As a matter of economics, therefore, this high percentage means comparatively little; its real significance lies in the fields of physiology and morality. The physiological question is also the chief element in the high percentage shown by printers and other classes whose work is of a kind to induce cravings for stimulants. The best illustration of the operation of economic forces in favor of temperance is the extremely small showing made by railroad employees, both in the relative number of paupers and in the percentage of pauperism due to intemperance.

Following out this comparison of relative numbers with relative percentages of intemperance in the matter of nativity, it is interesting to compare the Irish-born with the native Americans. Take the records of nativities for the New York City almshouse, for example, as summarized by Prof. B. C. Mathews in *The Forum* for January, 1899, and compare them with these percentages of pauperism due to drink. The Irish-born comprise 12.6 per cent of the city population; the native-born, 58 per cent. But the Irish-born furnish 60 per cent of the almshouse inmates, as against only 14 per cent furnished by the native-born residents. Of course, improved immigration laws and other causes make such conditions impossible for the future; but, taking these figures as historically true, we might say that a community of Irish-born Americans would furnish twenty times as many paupers as a community consisting of an equal number of

native Americans. When, now, we learn that among the Irish-born 40.7 per cent of pauperism is due to the personal use of liquor, as against 29.3 per cent among the native-born, it is clear that the drink habits of the Irish are a matter of great practical importance to the student of American economic conditions.

Thirdly, in the matter of crime.—In this field the investigation becomes more discriminating; for the several causes which contributed to “a condition which induced the crime” are sought and are arranged in the order of their influence in each particular case. The other causes considered are “unfavorable environment” and “lack of industrial training.” Intemperance appears as the principal cause in 31 per cent of the cases and as the sole cause in 16.8 per cent.

Here, again, the study of nativities is an important part of the inquiry. “What we conceive to be the hardest-drinking nationalities yield the highest percentages of intemperance as a cause of crime.” The Scandinavians head the list, with intemperance as the prime cause in 42.2 per cent of their crimes. They are closely followed by the Scotch, with 41.6, and the Canadians, with 40 per cent. The other representatives of the British Empire are not far below. The native-born hold a middle position, with 31.2 per cent; while the Germans, with 27.7 per cent of their crime due primarily to their love of beer, are the first in the list to show one of the other causes (namely, “unfavorable environment”) more potent than intemperance in leading to crime.

An analysis and classification of crimes permits the deduction that intemperance is the prime inducement in 29.6 per cent of crimes against property, in 36.1 per cent of crimes against the person and in 38.7 per cent of crimes against both property and person. “Among the highest grade of criminals, professional thieves, burglars, ‘cracksmen,’ *etc.*, there is very little personal intemperance.” Physiological and moral considerations are again suggested in the statement that “rape and kindred offenses against the person were found due to intemperance in comparatively few instances, and then more often to ancestral intemperance.”

We cannot enter upon other interesting parts of this report. It is the most elaborate and searching investigation that has as yet been made in these fields. It does not pretend to be comprehensive, either in subject-matter or in the territory covered; and it can hardly claim to be scientifically representative, for it failed to enlist the coöperation of some of the most important of the governmental insti-

tutions which are concerned with pauperism and crime. Having been conducted with special reference to the liquor problem, it inevitably dwarfs, more or less, other influences which contribute to distress and delinquency. In spite of instructions looking to absolute freedom from bias, intemperance could not but be in the eye of the investigator. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently exhaustive to afford a fair basis for most important inferences; and it can claim an impartiality of inquiry that makes it more reliable in its field than any other discussion which has had as wide a scope.

It is to be regretted that the conductors of the investigation did not find some plan of reducing at least to approximate figures the economic elements of intemperance. The committee has made a valuable study in social pathology, but it has not even diagnosed the economic symptoms of the case. It has not so much as hinted at the political economics of the subject, by estimating the pecuniary burden entailed upon society in the maintenance of charitable and corrective institutions. Many thoughtful people believe, however, that the most serious evils of drink, from an economic point of view, are not the direct and positive burdens imposed upon society, but the impairment of the efficiency of the drinker as an economic agent and the waste of wealth represented by that portion of the product which does the mischief. The investigation made by the United States Department of Labor (Twelfth Annual Report) gives the statistics of the liquor traffic as a normal business, making no attempt to show how much of this traffic is virtually destructive of economic value. The sixth chapter of that report, however, which gives the results of the experience of 7025 employers of labor relative to the effects of the use of intoxicants by their employees, is highly suggestive of what might be done toward getting a comprehensive view of the economics of intemperance.

In turning the pages of this book and studying the tables in the appendix, one cannot but be persuaded that it points the way to a greater work. If the economic sub-committee has left the most important section of its own field untouched, it has also begun a line of investigation that some appropriate committee should follow out. While reports from organized charities, almshouses and prisons afford slight data for estimating the total damage done by strong drink, such reports can be made complete enough to afford a basis for comparing the relative amounts of damage for which the liquor traffic is responsible in urban and rural districts, in foreign-born and native communities, and in regions under prohibitory laws, license

laws and other systems of regulation. The present investigation is chiefly confined to securing figures to prove general propositions which nobody disputes. The desideratum of the day is the securing of localized facts which shall fairly represent the results of particular conditions. In the United States, remedies for social ills are usually sought through political channels. What our politicians need is to be supplied with such a body of facts as shall remove liquor legislation from the sphere of blind experimentation. This report gives us a glimpse of the sources of such information and of the manner in which it is to be obtained.

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Chicago Conference on Trusts: Speeches, Debates, Resolutions; List of Delegates, Committees, etc. (Held September 13-16, 1899.) Chicago, Civic Federation of Chicago, 1900. — x, 626 pp.

It is probable that no non-political gathering has been held for many years which has been of greater importance than the Chicago conference on trusts. During the preceding two years the remarkable increase in the number of large industrial enterprises, and more especially the very large capitalization of some of the corporations formed, had aroused public attention and in many cases had excited alarm. Large classes of the people were sincerely of the opinion that even our political liberties were threatened by this concentration of capital, while many more felt that there was in progress an industrial revolution whose outcome no one could predict.

The Civic Federation of Chicago certainly acted wisely in calling together a conference, made up of men representing all of the leading interests in the different sections of the United States. In most cases the governors of the states chose representatives, not because of their political influence, but because they truly represented the interests of certain industrial classes or were persons well known as conservative thinkers on industrial questions, although there were present some men of national influence in partisan politics. The Civic Federation itself exercised like good judgment in the special invitations which it sent to individuals. It is questionable if a more widely representative economic gathering has ever met.

On the first day of the session it was clearly apparent that the representatives of political parties feared that some effort was to be made to turn the conference, which had been represented to be educational in its purpose, into one which should attempt to secure parti-